

**DATE:** November 16, 2020  
**REPORT NO:** C-08-2020  
**SUBJECT:** **Corporate Flag Policy**  
**CONTACT:** Jessica Dyson, Deputy Clerk  
Joanne Scime, Clerk

**OVERVIEW:**

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for a Corporate Flag Policy for the Township of West Lincoln.
- A Corporate Flag Policy has been developed to create guidelines that are both consistent and appropriate for flag raising requests and for flying flags at half-mast at all municipal facilities within the Township of West Lincoln that have a flag pole(s).
- This report will also seek approval of a Community Flag Pole location and provide delegated authority to the Clerk under specific guidelines as outlined in the report and policy.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT, the report RFD-C-08-2020, dated November 16, 2020, regarding "Corporate Flag Policy", be received; and,
2. THAT, Council approve the proposed Corporate Flag Policy and the Community Flag Raising Request form, attached as Schedule "A" and "B"; and,
3. THAT, Council delegate authority for approving or denying request for Community Flag Raising requests that have been previously approved or denied by Council within the last 5 years of the request date to the Clerk; and,
4. THAT, the Township Flag Policy adopted in 1987 and the Policy for Lowering Flag to Half Mast approved in 2004 be and are hereby repealed.

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

**Theme #3**

This report ties to the Corporate Strategic Plan with this policy highlighting Theme #3 Strategic, Responsible Growth as well as our Township values of respect, leadership and teamwork. Inclusion and diversity within the Township will bring the community together by providing community organizations with an opportunity to request flag raising that enhance awareness of special occasions and activities.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1987, the Township of West Lincoln adopted a policy with respect to the Township of West Lincoln Flag. This policy addressed the flying of the Township Flag, specifically where the Township Flag can be flown or displayed by individuals or organizations and its

treatment and how it is to be disposed of when it becomes worn, noticeably faded or otherwise unfit for service. Additionally, this policy addressed vandalism and/or theft of the Township Flag and provided that anyone found damaging a Township Flag or removing it from a pole or place where it has been affixed by or under the authority of the municipality shall be subject to prosecution in the Courts. Much of the language contained in the Township Flag Policy can be found in Section 2 of the proposed new Corporate Flag Policy, attached as Schedule “A” to this report.

Additionally, in 2004 the Township adopted a policy with respect to Lowering a Flag to Half Mast, which is done to commemorate special dates such as Remembrance Day or as a measure of respect and condolence when a high profile official passes away. Again, much of the content from this policy has been provided in Section 3 of the proposed new flag policy; however, neither of the former policies addressed procedures for requests that are received to fly community flags.

The Township has seen an increase in the number of requests to fly community flags as it seen as a way to enhance public awareness of activities such as fundraising drives, multi-cultural events and national or independence days. To date, the Township does not have a policy and/or procedures to address requests received to fly community flags and to ensure that all flags that are flown in a consistent and appropriate manner at all Township facilities and properties that have a flag pole.

In June 2020, an issue arose with the flying of the Pride Flag whereby there was a miscommunication with respect to the procedure for making a request to fly the Pride Flag. As a result of this issue, Council adopted the following resolution at the June 16, 2020 Special Council Meeting:

That, all flag raising requests, outside of this motion, be suspended until such time as Township staff have prepared a flag raising policy and reported back at a future Council or Committee meeting.

Flag poles are currently located at the following municipal locations:

- Township Municipal Building
- West Lincoln Community Centre
- West Lincoln Fire Hall – Station 1 and Station 2
- Caistorville Library
- Smithville Parkette

### **CURRENT SITUATION:**

As directed by Council in June 2020, staff researched policies from various municipalities across the Niagara Region as well as other Regions in the area to determine best practices to be included in a new Corporate Flag Policy.

The purpose of the new Corporate Flag Policy will outline the requirements for raising community flags at all Township facilities, as well as guidelines for flying flags at half-mast and ensuring all flags are flown and displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner.

### **Lowering Flag to Half-Mast**

The Township of West Lincoln lowers flags to half-mast as a symbol of mourning or

commemoration. Different circumstances may apply that determine what flag(s) will be flown at half-mast within the Township of West Lincoln as outlined in the Corporate Flag Policy attached as Schedule A to this report, specifically Section 3. The proposed policy differentiates between lowering a specific flag(s) for certain occasions, specifically as it may relate to a world, national, or local instance.

### **Community Flag Raising Requests**

Currently, community flags are raised on the flag pole located at the Township of West Lincoln Administration Building. Upon approval of the policy, requests to have a community flag flown with the Township will be made through the Clerks Department and presented to Council for approval. A copy of the Community Flag Raising Request form is attached as Schedule “B” to this report and will be posted on the Township’s website for community groups to complete when requesting the municipality to raise their respective community flag.

To reduce the need to go to Council each year with the same request, staff are recommending that the Township Clerk be delegated authority to permit a community flag to be raised that received previous approval of Council within five (5) years of the initial request, provided that the new request is consistent with the former request and the Corporate Flag Policy.

Additionally, staff is recommending that a Community Flagpole be designated that will be used for groups and organizations that request and receive approval for their flag to be flown in the Township of West Lincoln. In the past, the flagpole at the Township Municipal Office has been used for flying community flags which has in many cases included a brief ceremony and media exposure; however, because the West Lincoln Community Centre is centralized and hosts many events and social gatherings, staff are recommending that the flag pole at the West Lincoln Community Centre (WLCC) be designated as the location for community flag raisings. The WLCC attracts a number of people due to the different services that are offered at this facility including but not limited to the Smithville Library, the skate park, splash pad, ball diamond, playground, walking track, fitness programs, community events, room rental opportunities, park amenities, as well as playing hockey and other recreational activities (gymnasium). With this high level of traffic, it seems most fitting to use the WLCC as the location for the Community Flag raising in order to provide awareness to the community and beyond.

In addition to having the community flagpole at the WLCC, in the event that half-masting should occur due to circumstances outlined within the Corporate Flag Policy, the half-masting will not interfere with the community flag as there is a Township flag at the Township Municipal Building.

There are three (3) flags that are flown at the WLCC being the Canadian Flag, Provincial Flag and the Township Flag. When a community flag raising request is approved, their flag will take place of the Township Flag for the allotted duration.

### **Delegation of Authority**

The proposed delegation of authority to the Clerk will allow for requests for community flag raising to be processed in a timely manner in the event a request has been previously

approved by Council within five (5) years of the current request, provided that the new request is consistent with the Corporate Flag Policy. In these cases, the Clerk or a member of her staff will send a communication to Members of Council advising of the request and any pertinent details including ceremonies, etc.

### **Poll from Council**

During the months of July, August as well as December, Standing Committee and/or Council meetings are reduced with one or two meetings being held during these months. In the event that a request is submitted and a community flag raising event is to occur before a scheduled Standing Committee and/or Council meeting, provided that the request is consistent with the proposed Corporate Flag Policy and to address time constraints, the Clerk may ask Members of Council to vote via email or by telephone for approval of the request, providing Council Members a 24-hour timeframe to respond with the majority of responses ruling either in favour or against the flag raising request.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no direct financial implications with the Corporate Flag Policy.

### **INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:**

This report has been reviewed by Senior Managers and has been subsequently supported.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends that Council approve the proposed Corporate Flag Policy attached as Schedule A to this report, approve West Lincoln Community Centre as the Community Flag Pole location, as well as provide delegated authority to the Clerk to approve any flag requests that received previous approval of Council within the last 5 years of the initial request and that the Township Flag Policy adopted in 1987 and the Policy for Lowering Flag to Half Mast approved in 2004 be repealed as the majority of the contents of these policies have been incorporated into the new Corporate Flag Policy.

**Prepared by:**



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**Jessica Dyson, Deputy Clerk**

**Prepared & Submitted by:**



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**Joanne Scime, Clerk**

**Approved by:**



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**Bev Hendry, CAO**